

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1821

UNCLAS PRETORIA 4162

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EIND, SWEL, TBIO, SF

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL FOOD LABELLING SURVEY

REFERENCE: STATE 178135

1. FDA REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE WITH SURVEY ON LAWS, REGULATIONS, PRACTICES AND OTHER RELATED INFORMATION BEARING ON CARBOHYDRATE LABELLING HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH SA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OFFICIALS. THE RELENT RSA LEGISLATION IS THE "FOODSTUFFS, COSMETICS AND DISINFECTANTS ACT" (ACT 54 OF 1972).

2. NO QUANTITATIVE DECLARATION OF CARBOHYDRATES IS REQUIRED UNDER THIS ACT EXCEPT UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES DEFINED IN SUBREGULATION 29, WHICH IS APPLICABLE IN THE CASE OF A GENERAL CLAIM THAT THE FOODSTUFF IS FORTIFIED OR NUTRITIOUS OR THAT IT PROVIDES BALANCED NUTRITION OR THAT IT IS NUTRITIONALLY COMPLETE OR THAT IT WILL INCREASE OR REDUCE MASS. AMOUNT OF CARBOHYDRATES MUST BE SHOWN IN GRAMS PER SERVING.

3. A NON-QUANTITATIVE DECLARATION OF INGREDIENTS IN DESCENDING ORDER OF MASS OR VOLUME IS REQUIRED ON ALL FOODS. (WE ARE INFORMED THAT THIS PROVISION IS NOT ENFORCED.)

4. HEALTH CLAIMS MAY BE MADE UNDER SUBREGULATION 29 ONLY AS UNCLASSIFIED

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DESCRIBED ABOVE. MEDICINAL CLAIMS ARE NOT PERMITTED WITHOUT THE FOOD BEING REGISTERED AS A MEDICINE UNDER "MEDICINES AND OTHER RELATED SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT, NO. 101 OF 1965", WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS:

(A) MARGARINE MANUFACTURERS CAN SAY THAT POLYSATURATED FATS CAN BE A FACTOR IN HEART DISEASE;

(B) SORBITOL CAN BE SAID TO HELP PREVENT DENTAL CAVITIES;

(C) ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS CAN BE SAID TO BE USEABLE
BY DIABETICS; AND

(D) ROUGHAVE (FIBER) CAN BE SAID TO HELP IN
CERTAIN DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS.

5. OTHER MACRO NUTRIENTS FALL UNDER THE SAME REGULATIONS
APPLICABLE TO CARBOHYDRATES.

6. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY THAT THEY FOLLOW
FDA AND EUROPEAN STANDARDS QUITE CLOSELY BUT CONCEDE THEY
HAVE NOT LOOKED AT CARBOHYDRATE LABELLING SPECIFICALLY.

7. A POLITICALLY STRONG LOCAL SUGAR INDUSTRY WILL IN
ALL PROBABILITY STREANOUSLY RESIST SUCH LABELLING.

8. IF COPY OF LABELLING AND ADVERTISING REGULATIONS
UNDER ACT 54 IS WANTED, PLEASE INDICATE ADDRESS IN
FDA TO WHICH IT SHOULD BE SENT.
EDMONDSON

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